

**Earth Observation System  
*Ad hoc* Inter-governmental Group on Earth Observations (GEO)**

**Terms of Reference**

Recalling the Earth Observation Summit Declaration of 31 July 2003, the participating governmental entities (collectively referred to as the "Members") set forth the following, legally non-binding Terms of Reference for the *ad hoc* inter-governmental Group on Earth Observations (GEO). The purpose of the GEO is to prepare a 10-year implementation plan for developing a comprehensive, coordinated and sustained Earth observation system.

**1. Purpose of the GEO**

To prepare a 10-year implementation plan for a comprehensive, coordinated and sustained Earth observation system.

**2. Functions of the GEO**

The GEO will seek to:

- 2.1 Further define the concept of a comprehensive, coordinated, and sustained Earth observation system that will meet collective requirements for observations, minimize data gaps, and optimize the utility of the system.
- 2.2 Prepare a 10-year plan for the implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated and sustained Earth observation system, building on existing systems, such that the Framework will be available by next spring's Tokyo ministerial conference and the full plan will be available within one year for discussion and subsequent adoption.
- 2.3 Establish a process to periodically evaluate and revise the 10-year implementation plan.
- 2.4 Identify strategies to improve and sustain developing countries' contribution to observing systems, as well as their access to observations, thereby building local scientific and technical expertise.
- 2.5 Conduct such other activities as the Members may deem necessary.

### **3. Organization of the GEO**

- 3.1 The GEO is open to all interested governments.
- 3.2 Each Member will name one senior-level government representative and one alternate. Each Member will determine the nature of its participation in the activities of the GEO. The GEO may also invite the participation, as observers, of other organizations, international bodies, and individual experts.
- 3.3 The GEO will meet at such times and places as determined by its Members.
- 3.4 Decisions of the GEO will be made by consensus of its Members.
- 3.5 At its inaugural meeting, GEO Members will elect two Members to serve as co-chairs for a one-year term.
- 3.6 The GEO may establish subgroups, as appropriate.
- 3.7 The United States will provide secretariat support to the GEO, unless otherwise decided by GEO Members.

### **4. Funding**

Unless otherwise agreed, any costs arising from activities under these Terms of Reference will be borne by the Member that incurs them. Each Member's participation in GEO activities will be subject to the availability of funds, personnel and other resources.

### **5. Duration**

- 5.1 Activities under these Terms of Reference will commence upon adoption and will continue until 1 August 2004, unless extended or terminated.
- 5.2 The terms of this document may be modified in writing at any time by agreement of the Members.